

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 05936 290841Z

12

ACTION NEA-06

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R 290730Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8055

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION USUN

USINT DAMASCUS

DIA

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T BEIRUT 5936

LIMDIS

JERUSALEM FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS MOPS XF LE IS

SUBJECT: LEBANON, FEDAYEEN AND ISRAEL

REF: BEIRUT DAO 315

1. IN CONVERSATION EVENING MAY 27, LEBANESE ARMY
COMMANDER GENERAL GHANEM AND DIRECTOR GENERAL OF
PRESIDENCY DIB RAISED WITH EMBOFF QUESTION OF
ALMOST DAILY EXCHANNE OF FIRE BETWEEN LEBANESE AND
ISRAELI ARMY BECAUSE OF IDF PERSISTENCE IN OCCUPY-
ING OSTENTATIVELY DURING DAY TWO OP'S NEAR CHEBAA
AND FIRING ON CIVILIAN CARS ATTEMPTING REACH CHEBAA
FROM HASBAYAH. OVER PAST TEN DAYS LEBANESE ARMY
HAS HAD SOME TWELVE SOLDIERS WOUNDED (ONLY TWO
SERIOUSLY) IN EXCHANGES OF ARTILLERY FIRE IN CHEBAA

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SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 05936 290841Z

AREA. GHANEM AND DIB ASKED THAT USG TRY AND DO SOMETHING

TO EASE SITUATION.

2. THEY SAID THAT LEBANESE ARMY HAD BEEN CONSTRAINED BY INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION START FIRING AT IDF PATROLS MOVING INTO TWO OP'S (WHICH THEY ADMIT HAVE BEEN OCCUPIED OFF AND ON BY IDF FOR FOUR YEARS) AFTER IDF BEGAN FIRING AT CARS TRYING REACH CHEBAA AND WHEN IDF BEGAN MOVING UP TO OP'S IN ARMORED VEHICLES, WHICH PLAINLY VISIBLE TO EVERYONE IN AREA (INCLUDING STREAM OF POLITICAL FIGURES WHO COME AS VISITORS AND THEN ATTACK GOL AND ARMY FOR WEAKNESS.) THIS BEGAN, ACCORDING TO GHANEM, AFTER INCIDENT OF MAY 2 OR 3 WHEN SA'IQ AMBUSHED IDF TANKS ON ROAD ON LEBANESE SIDE OF MT HERMON AND TOOK THREE PRISONERS (OF WHOM ONLY TWO REACHED DAMASCUS).

3. GHANEM REFERRED TO INCIDENT WE HAD HEARD OF EARLIER FROM NON-MILITARY SOURCES THAT LEBANESE ARMY HAD DURING EVENING MAY 24-25 STOPPED GROUP OF PFLP/GC WHICH TRYING INFILTRATE INTO ISRAEL FROM ARKUB, AND LATER KIDNAPPING BY FEDAYEEN OF THREE LEBANESE SOLDIERS WHO SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED. HE TOOK USUAL LINE THAT LEBANESE ARMY DOING WHAT IT CAN WITH LIMITED MEANS, BUT COULD NOT CONTROL FEDAYEEN INFILTRATION COMPLETELY. HE AND DIB EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT IDF FINALLY TACKLING PROBLEM OF SECURING THEIR SIDE OF BORDER WITH CHARACTERISTIC ENERGY AND IMAGINATION. THEY THINK THIS WILL BE MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN PRE-MAALOT STATE OF AFFAIRS WHEN THERE WERE FEW PATROLS, MINEFIELDS, AND CHECKPOINTS IN NORTHERN GALILEE AND FENCE COULD EASILY BE CROSSED.

4. GHANEM CLAIMED THERE NO NEED FOR IDF FEAR FEDAYEEN COULD REACH CHEBAA BY CAR SINCE LEBANESE ARMY CAREFULLY CHECKED ALL CARS DESTINED FOR CHEBAA. HE GAVE STRONG HINT THAT IF IDF COULD LOWER ITS PROFILE DURING DAYLIGHT, LEBANESE ARMY WOULD FIND NO PROBLEM IN IDF CONTINUING USE OP'S ABOVE CHEBAA AND KFAR CHOUBA IN ORDER WATCH ACTIVITIES IN ARKUB AND BETTER PROTECT ROAD ON MT MERMON.

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 05936 290841Z

5. COMMENT: I DO NOT BELIEVE USG SHOULD UNDERTAKE FORMAL MIDDLEMAN ROLE ON REQUEST MADE BY GHANEM AND DIB, ESPECIALLY SINCE THIS IS SORT OF PROBLEM WHICH CAN BEST BE SETTLED IN TALKS BETWEEN REPS OF TWO ARMIES UNDER ILMAC AUSPICES. HOWEVER, I THINK IT COULD PROVE USEFUL FOR EMBASSY TEL AVIV AUTHORIZE ITS DATT TO RAISE QUESTION OF CLASHES WITH LEBANESE ARMY IN CHEBAA AREA INFORMALLY WITH APPROPRIATE IDF OFFICERS

TO SEE HOW THEY REGARD SITUATION AND WHAT THEY THINK
MIGHT BE DONE. AFTER SUCH DISCUSSION THERE, I WOULD PROPOSE
SUGGESTING TO GOL THAT THEY RAISE MATTER DIRECTLY
WITH IDF IN ILMAC. UNLESS THERE IS SOME CHANGE IN SITU-
ATION, THIS QUESTION VERY LIKELY BE RAISED WITH UN SYG
WALDHEIM WHEN HE ARRIVES HERE JUNE 3, WITH REQUEST HE
TAKE IT UP WITH GOL. GODLEY

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NNN

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